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ABSTRACT

Homelessness in the United Kingdom has very wide ramifications. Young homeless people face a difficult transition into adult life as poverty, low self-esteem, lack of family support, and lack of qualifications reinforce each others' effects. Homeless young people start behind their peers in educational achievement. Government policies put up barriers that prevent them from achieving full economic independence and contributing to society. This manifesto puts forward proposals to remove those barriers, focusing on four problem areas: barriers to full-time studying caused by the change in status at age 19; difficulty accessing higher education without access to accommodations during school vacations; the effect of Housing Benefit regulations on discouraging homeless young people from seeking employment; and lack of support in finding accommodations and work after leaving prison. It concludes that homeless young people need extra help from the government in order to overcome their disadvantages as they try to become participants in the labor market. Instead, they face barriers not shared by their peers who still live at home. (Contains 10 references.) (SM)

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ED 460 177

HOW HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

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MAKE OR BREAK

HOW HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

100,000 lives are potentially on the scrapheap

Homeless young people start behind their contemporaries in educational achievement – with 50% lacking any qualifications, seven times the proportion in their age group as a whole, amounting to a shocking 100,000 lives potentially on the scrap heap.[1] They do not lack potential – time after time Foyers have been able to uncover abilities and help young people to fulfil them, by going to college or university, setting up businesses, or gaining employment. But Government policies put up barriers which prevent them from achieving full economic independence and contributing to society.

In this Manifesto we put forward proposals to remove these barriers, for consideration by the next Government. Rough sleepers have dominated Government policy on homelessness over the last four years – it's time to take a much broader view of issues affecting homeless people, and look at measures that can enable them to participate in society on an equal footing to their peers.

New research covering nearly 300 young people in a sample of Foyers showed that 40% of residents aged 19 or over would benefit from being able to study full-time to catch up on their education. Of these, 29% needed to gain GCSEs, 21% A levels, and 50% vocational qualifications at NVQ Level 3 or higher. But age related policies, which deny young people over the age of 19 the opportunity to study full time while claiming benefits, discriminate against homeless young people, who have often stepped or fallen off the education escalator in their early teens and take time to get back on.

The qualifications Foyer residents aspire to take time to obtain, but give those who possess them value in the labour market. Often, however, young homeless people are steered towards lower level vocational qualifications which have little or no economic return (see below).

The numbers involved are worth bothering about. According to a recent survey, Shelter alone fielded over 10,000 calls in a single year from young people sleeping rough. The last detailed investigation into the scale of youth homelessness estimated that between 150,000 and 250,000 young people aged between 16 and 25 had no permanent place to live. And Government statistics show that while the mean age of leaving home is 22–23, 23% of young people have already left home by the age of 19, mostly unwillingly.[2] Some have been fending for themselves from as young as 10.

This Manifesto focuses on four issues:

- **the barrier to studying caused by the change in status at age 19**
- **the difficulty of accessing university education without access to accommodation during vacations**
- **the effect of Housing Benefit regulations in discouraging homeless young people from seeking employment**
- **the lack of support in finding accommodation and work on leaving prison**

Given the difficulties they face, the achievements of young homeless people in Foyers look impressive. On entry, only 30% had completed their school studies, 50% had no qualifications, 17% had stopped attending school by the age of 14, and 33% had been excluded short-term or permanently. Nevertheless 75% were engaged in study, training or work on leaving the Foyer, compared to 31% on entry.[3]

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STUDYING FULL TIME AFTER [illegible]

THE PROBLEM

An important plank in the Government's long-term anti-poverty strategy is to encourage everyone to engage in lifelong learning, in order to acquire the skills to work in occupations where both pay and security are adequate to lift individuals out of poverty. Low skilled employees not only have lower wages but have much more intermittent patterns of employment. They generally do not get access to in-work training which would allow them to progress.

The Prime Minister recently recognised this problem in his speech on the New Deal – 'There are still young people of talent and potential who do not see their potential fulfilled.' Government policy is a direct cause. Government policy encourages young people to remain in full-time study aged of 16–18, but then makes it almost impossible to do so over the age of 19.

For young people aged 16–18, Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) in certain pilot areas provide income support to young people in low income families who study full-time. EMAs appear to be having a very positive impact and are likely to be extended. The new Connexions Service aims to increase participation in education and training of 16–17 year olds, and to increase the proportion of 19 year olds with NVQ Level 2 equivalent qualifications.

However, there is a stark change of direction at 18+. Government policies steer unemployed people aged 18+ into

The present system ensures that young homeless people are likely to be banished to a lifetime of low-paid, insecure work.

the New Deal, where the primary goal is to get them into work. If they lack skills, this usually means unskilled work. There is provision for young people to study for up to 1 year full-time, but many New Deal Advisers steer young people away from this and towards employment, or limit the opportunity to people studying at NVQ Level 1 or 2. To quote from recent Ministerial correspondence, 'The New Deal is designed to help young people get into work and throughout the programme they continue to search for work moving into employment as it becomes available.' In other words, however well they are progressing at college, they can be hauled out of their course and made to take a job if one comes up, whether or not it matches their skills and potential.

For those outside the New Deal, usually because they have not spent a continuous 6 months unemployed, the picture changes sharply at 20. Up to 20, they can have college fees remitted and receive Income Support if they are already studying on their 19th birthday. But at 20, irrespective of their educational history or potential, they are effectively blocked from studying full time at college,

THE SOLUTION

There are two possible solutions. One, would be to extend the concept of the Educational Maintenance Allowance to give homeless young people who have not yet reached qualifications at NVQ Level 3 the opportunity to receive the allowance at any time up to the age of 25. With linked entitlement to Housing Benefit and remission of fees, this would make full-time study feasible. This was the approach favoured by most of the Foyers interviewed in recent research but would require that entitlement to EMAs were extended to the whole country.

Foyer managers felt that the compulsory attendance and 'homework' requirements of the EMA would be effective in achieving results. The EMA for homeless young people being piloted in Nottingham allows Foyers and other housing providers to certify that young people are homeless, which then allows them more flexibility, for example to begin their studies at the Foyer rather than at college.

A second approach would be to shift the focus of the New Deal to recognise the long term economic value of young

AGE OF 19

CASE STUDY • JAMES

James came to the Foyer in 1999 following an unsettled housing background, and at a point where he was about to become homeless again.

During this period James had become involved in the drugs scene, which he financed by busking and dealing drugs, for which he had previously had a conviction. He had been given a community service order and was required to attend a drugs treatment project as part of his sentence.

In the next year at the Foyer James did not re-offend and attended drugs counselling.

At the age of 21 James wanted to move on, get settled and take up full-time study, doing A levels or a course at college. Having explored several avenues with the Foyer staff, including the New Deal options, James was forced to give up his ambition. He would be unable to attend college at the Foyer as he would no longer qualify for full Housing Benefit, and part-time work would not provide enough income to live on.

At this point James pointed out to the Foyer Manager that had he continued to deal drugs, he would now be able to support himself through college.

whether for academic or vocational qualifications. Opportunity sharply cuts away, and the message from Government seems to be 'You've missed the window of opportunity and whatever potential you have is now useless. Go and join the lower ranks of the labour market.'

In urban areas it may be possible for young people to work part-time and study part-time. But this extends a 2 year A level course to 3–4 years at a time and means that homeless young people fall further and further behind their contemporaries. In rural area this is not an option, because lack of transport makes it impossible to get to work and to college.

This matters because of the increasing weight of academic research on the two tier labour market. This shows a sharp divide between employees with medium level vocational qualifications and above, who in general earn wages that lift them above the poverty line, enjoy good security and receive further training at work , and the less skilled, who tend to be in and out of work, and earn wages that leave them on or below the poverty line. Specifically, employees with skills at NVQ Level 2 and below receive little training at work, and tend to be trapped in the low wage, low security part of the labour market. Recent research[4] shows zero economic returns to both men and women with lower level City and Guilds qualifications, equivalent to the vocational side of NVQ2. In other words, getting these qualifications does not increase the income they can command in the labour market. The academic equivalent of GCSE/O levels shows returns of 10–12% ie incomes are 10–12% higher than they would have been without qualifications. It is only at the equivalent of NVQ3 that vocational qualifications start to have a positive payback, for men, of 4–7%.

By blocking full-time study and channelling young people towards low level vocational qualifications, the system ensures that young people who for whatever reason have no qualifications at 19 are likely to stay that way and suffer a lifetime of low paid insecure work.

people achieving worthwhile qualifications. Young people would then be able to study for up to two years while on JSA, not just one, and would be able to study for qualifications up to NVQ3/A level. This could be combined with an obligation to undertake a certain amount of paid work or work experience, which the Employment Service would help to source, so that young people were also equipping themselves for the world of work.

The Foyer Federation in partnership with ICL and with funding from DfEE are developing a network of UK Online Centres in Foyers which will provide internet access and awareness, and access to LearnDirect and other courses, free of charge for Foyer residents and others in the local community. The intention is to assist learners – target 40,000 over three years – who wish to to progress to more formal training for example in the local FE college. Improving the financial climate for non-traditional learners will be an essential complement to this work.

THE PROBLEM

At least 10% of homeless young people in Foyers and elsewhere have already demonstrated the potential to study in higher education.[5] This is hardly surprising, when the Government's target is that 50% of the current youth cohort will eventually access higher education. Even if the proportion for young homeless people was half as great, this would equate to a potential student body among homeless young people of 5,000 per year. Unfortunately they face significant barriers in achieving this goal, over and above those they share with low income students living at home.

Students from low income families are under-represented in higher education. While in 1997 approximately one third of school leavers in the UK entered higher education, this varied from a ratio of 3% in the most disadvantaged areas to over 80% in the most affluent areas. Recent research in Scotland[6] quotes the fact that around three quarters of young people with 2 A levels in social classes I and II make a direct transition to higher education, compared with half of equivalently qualified young people in social classes IV and V. This research also found that young people from lower social classes were more likely to enrol in lower level degrees such as HND. This may well be a rational response to the risks involved in self-financing higher education.

It is hardly surprising that many homeless young people decide higher education is not meant for them.

But even students from low income families are considerably better off than homeless young people. In many cases they have the option of studying locally and continuing to live with their families at little or no cost. If they are unable to do this, they can still come home for the vacations, which total nearly half the academic year. Thus they only have to fund living costs, by working and/or taking out a student loan, for just over half the year. In some cases

THE SOLUTION

The Opportunity Bursaries recently announced by DfEE represent a welcome increase in the financial support available to some low income students. However, we believe the additional financial problems caused by lack of a parental home need particular recognition.

Until recently, young people in local authority care were able to have their long vacation costs covered by LEAs. This provision was little used – one estimate is that no more than 20 young people benefited from the scheme during the time it was in place, though where it was vigorously promoted the proportion was higher, and was felt to be very useful to the young people concerned.

This provision has now been subsumed in more general duties to promote the education of young people who have been in care. As only about 20% of young people in Foyers been in care, a more wide ranging mechanism is needed. We would like to see a dedicated bursary fund specifically targetted at the long vacation costs of young people under the age of 25 who do not have access to a parental home. Organisations such as Foyers, hostels and providers of supported accommodation for homeless young people could certify that the young people were genuinely homeless, as they are already able to do under the special arrangements for the Educational Maintenance Allowance for homeless young people. It is unlikely that young people would become homeless in order to benefit from a grant of this size, as they would still be better off living at home and having their costs covered in the short vacations.

The costs of a scheme of this kind would initially be very small, perhaps £1.44 m p.a (500 young people for three years @16 weeks rent of £60/week) as it would take time for

they can work during the vacations and save some money towards their living costs during term-time. And the Rowntree research showed that over half even of unemployed parents gave their children some financial support, as compared with 91% of the whole sample.

Young homeless people have nowhere to return to during the vacations, but neither can they claim Housing Benefit during the vacations (except in very narrowly defined circumstances). If they wish to stay in their Foyer or hostel and study locally, so as to continue to receive support from the employment and training staff, they are unlikely to be able to afford the rent without Housing Benefit. But if they move away to go to university they may find that the pastoral support is not sufficient to compensate for the lack of parental support, and they have to move out of their accommodation during vacations, leaving them homeless again.

Adding these to the many other barriers they share with other low income students (the cost and risk of student loans, lack of self-belief and unfamiliarity with the entrance procedures) it is not surprising that some homeless young people decide that higher education is not meant for them.

CASE STUDY • LINDA

Linda was homeless when she returned from Ireland to her home town in England. She found a place in the local Foyer and after a few months graduated to move-on accommodation.

She applied to the local university to do a two year foundation degree course in psychology with the goal of becoming a special needs teacher working with autistic and dyspraxic children. However, because she would not have any vacation accommodation to return to, she decided that she could not give up her flat, but neither could she afford to pay the rent and council tax, amounting to £72 week, without Housing Benefit.

As a result she has abandoned her ambition of going to university and is taking equivalent courses at the local college on a part-time basis, which almost doubles the length of time that she will be studying.

Even though she is studying part-time at college, with homework and placements on top of 15 hours of classes, the Job Centre still expected her to be available for full-time work. Accordingly she has signed off JSA and works in a pub to earn enough to replace her JSA.

Linda is fortunate in that she has an opportunity to work part-time and earn enough to replace her JSA while still having enough time to study. In areas of the country where job opportunities are limited, this strategy is not available.

awareness to spread throughout referral agencies – as indicated by the experience of the grant for looked after children. At its full potential it would be unlikely to cost more than £14m p.a. It might be possible for a consortium of agencies working with homeless young people to take on the administration.

The economic returns to higher education are substantial. Recent research[7] suggest that even after adjustment for variables such as ability and family background, the economic returns are 10–28% for men and 21–26% for women. On this basis the Government would recoup in higher taxes the additional costs of this subsidy, and homeless young people would still be making the major investment in their higher education by covering those living costs they share with students as a whole.

Following on from *The Final Hurdle*, our research report into the obstacles young homeless people face in accessing higher education, The Foyer Federation has produced a guide to accessing higher education for homeless young people with support from the Nuffield Foundation, which will be available on our web-site shortly. We are also working closely with DfEE to try to encourage Foyer residents to make use of the Opportunity Bursaries.

HOUSING BENEFIT REGULATIONS

THE PROBLEM

One of the Government's highest priorities is to ensure that everyone who is capable of working is able to find and sustain employment, and is demonstrably better off in employment. However, when someone who is unemployed, and receiving Housing Benefit to cover their rent, takes up employment, Housing Benefit is reduced very steeply. This is a particular problem for homeless young people living in Foyers and hostels, where the funding system means that rents cover some of the costs of the support services provided to the young people. They may therefore be too high to be affordable on a low wage. In theory no-one should be worse off in work than out of work. In practice, once costs associated with work such as travel and clothing are counted in, young homeless people may be no better off in work. Pressure to repay debts mounts once a young person has a job. Often 'work doesn't pay.'

Or, it pays only if, on taking the job, the young person gives up their accommodation in the Foyer or hostel – a place they may have come to regard as home. They are then faced with living independently, with no money to equip a new home, just when they are trying to make a success of work. And if the job doesn't work out, they may be return to the Foyer or hostel, only to have to face the same choice next time a job comes up.

When someone takes up employment, Housing Benefit is reduced very steeply ... often work doesn't pay.

But it gets worse. For young homeless people, taking a job can be a high risk strategy. Work is often precarious, either because short term casual jobs are all they can find, because they are pressured to take work which is unsuitable, or because their lack of experience or maturity means that they make mistakes which lead to them being dismissed. For a young person living at home, any income is likely to be an addition to family resources, and there is little risk in taking

THE SOLUTION

The Foyer Federation would like to see fixed term 6 month Housing Benefit claims introduced for young people aged 25 and under. Young people face discrimination through the Single Room Rent, which the Government may soften, as set out in the Government's response to the Housing Green Paper, but will not eliminate. Allowing them fixed term claims would partially compensate for this disadvantage.

Fixed term claims would mean that young people who remained at the same address would be entitled to continue to draw Housing Benefit for up to 6 months after they took up employment, depending on where in the cycle they were when they took up employment. For them it would replace the current system whereby Housing Benefit can be paid for up to 4 weeks after taking up work. However, the current system requires that someone has been out of work for 6 months continuously, which relatively few homeless young people have been, and does not provide a long enough period to enable young people to settle in work before moving on to more affordable accommodation. Also the regulations require that the run-on payment be claimed within 8 days of taking up work, but it is not always apparent at the outset whether a job will be permanent.

Fixed term claims are normal for other forms of benefit eg Family Credit, now the Working Families Tax Credit. In other countries the equivalent of Housing Benefit operates on a fixed term basis. The National Housing Federation, Chartered Institute of Housing and the Citizens Advice Bureaux all supported this measure in their evidence to the Social Security Select Committee, which in its turn recommended in its July 2000 Report on Housing Benefit that fixed term claims be introduced. Given the administrative difficulties surrounding Housing Benefit in many local authorities, such a change would also reduce the workload of staff.

Safeguards would have to be built in to protect people whose circumstances worsened during their claim, for

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up employment. But for those receiving Housing Benefit, any change of circumstance (ie income) has to be reported and a completely new claim made for benefit. As one Foyer manager put it 'A Housing Benefit claim is a delicate thing. Breathe on it and you wreck it. The last thing you want to do is keep changing it.'

If the young person is in and out of work at different wages, the system is often unable to keep up with changes of circumstance, leading to Housing Benefit payments being delayed or suspended. Without Housing Benefit, significant rent arrears build up, with a risk of eviction, and/or a County Court judgement. So young homeless people in accommodation with support face an impossible choice – take the work that is on offer and put their accommodation at risk – or stay on benefit, just when support is available to help them get into work.

Meanwhile both Foyer staff and Housing Benefit staff spend unproductive time just trying to keep the paper chase in synch with events. It is not unusual for even a small Foyer to devote half of a staff member's time just to dealing with Housing Benefit claims.

example if they were in work when they made a claim and then lost their job. However, in this situation they would have every incentive to find another job quickly, and would risk nothing by doing so. While there clearly would be a disincentive effect when the Housing Benefit claim expired, by this stage we would expect that homeless young people would have had sufficient time to move on to accommodation that was affordable without Housing Benefit.

The Foyer Federation seeks to ensure that Foyers make their rents affordable to young people taking up employment, through raising charitable funds to offer bursaries to young workers or through other means. However, while some Foyers have managed to do this, others do not have spare fund-raising capacity to devote to this purpose.

CASE STUDY • TONY

Tony was referred to the Foyer at the age of 17 by Social Services. His mother was dead and he was living with his sister who had given him notice to leave. He was extremely vulnerable and had started offending, in addition to which he had also been attending counselling for alcohol abuse.

On entering the Foyer in July 1999, he was unemployed and not receiving benefits. He submitted a Housing Benefit claim on moving in, and on 12th October Housing Benefit wrote to him stating that they could not make a payment because they had mislaid the copy of his tenancy agreement. This was sent to them on 14th October.

On 12th November, a payment was received only for the period 5th July to 5th September, as Tony had started a four week course on 6th September with an employment scheme. In order to claim the outstanding payment, on 30th November he submitted proof of JSA and 4 weekly payslips. He was asked to provide these proofs again in December.

He re-applied for Housing Benefit on 21st January 2000, having undertaken some casual work over the Christmas period. Despite the fact that he had now completed 3 claim forms, on 25th January he was asked to complete another.

On 29th March he went back to Housing Benefit requesting that they look into this backdating issue again. He was informed that this could not be actioned due to a backlog. Eventually, on 25th April, his backdating request was refused stating that he had not proved that he had good reasons for not claiming on time, even though he had already returned 3 claim forms within the timeframe. On 26th April an appeal was sent to Housing Benefit regarding this assessment. This letter was faxed again on 12th July, as we had received no response.

We have now been informed that JSA stopped on 30th August because he had attended the training course, therefore Housing Benefit would not be paid for this period. In the meantime, Tony has taken on temporary work as a mechanic, labourer, and groundsman, maintaining earnings below the benefit threshold. When he has earned money, he has made contributions to his rent, nonetheless the refusal of Housing Benefit has left him with significant arrears, a matter the Foyer staff are still pursuing. Tony became disillusioned with being forced to limit his working in the interests of sorting out his Housing Benefit claim, and he gave up working completely, as he could not understand why he should abide by the rules only to be let down and left to pay such arrears.

The Foyer staff have continued to work with Tony, and he is once again receiving Housing Benefit. He is struggling to pay off the arrears which had accrued from when he was on the training programme at the beginning of his tenancy. Having achieved this success with his benefits, they have now unexpectedly requested an overpayment of £1501.00 – and it looks as though the whole process is starting again.

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HELPING YOUNG PRISONERS RE
WITH LEARNING AND WORK

THE PROBLEM

A significant proportion of young people in Foyers have been in custody – *Moving on Up*[8] found that about 10% had spent time in a YOI, and others will have been in prison. Being in custody for some young people represents a turning point, an opportunity to address educational deficits, improve self-esteem and overcome dependency problems. Given that a majority of young offenders left school early and/or were excluded, and that at least 50% of offenders have been found to have basic skills deficits, the need is unarguable. But such opportunities are the exception rather than the rule because the required services do not exist.

Moreover, when young people leave custody, if their sentence was less than a year they have no entitlement to resettlement support. This results in the profoundly irrational situation whereby we spend £3,700 per person on conviction and sentencing, and around £22,000 per year on custody, and yet at the crucial moment that will influence the likelihood of re-offending ie on release there is no funding whatsoever to ensure that a young person has safe accommodation to go to and help in getting into work or learning.[9]

We spend £22,000 per person a year to lock people up – but nothing on safe accommodation, access to work or training when they get out.

Research has shown repeatedly that prisoners released homeless are more likely to re-offend. For example a Home Office research study cited by NACRO[10] showed that less than a third of prisoners who had homes to go to were reconvicted, compared with 69% of prisoners without accommodation. Young people without a family home to go back to are particularly vulnerable. Often the first offer of accommodation may come from a pimp or dealer, with

THE SOLUTION

Improvement in the life chances of young offenders requires a combination of better services within prison and a much more consistent approach to resettlement support.

We believe that every young offender should be encouraged to make up as much learning as possible while in prison, whether this begins and ends with addressing basic and life skills deficits, or allows progression to vocational or academic qualifications. This should be a key performance indicator for all custodial institutions working with young offenders. Custody should be seen as an opportunity for intensive remedial work on academic and life skills, and every young offender should undergo diagnostic tests to provide an accurate basis for guidance.

Secondly all young offenders should be provided with integrated pre-and post release resettlement support, but with a particular emphasis on those prisoners who will be homeless on release. This will require a much more ambitious network of linkages between local consortia of housing providers and the Prison and Probation Service than currently exists, together with funding to allow housing providers to travel to interview offenders while they are still in custody, and to enable spaces to be kept open for a small number of weeks until the offender is released.

Halving the re-offending rate, in line with the findings

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disastrous long-term consequences.

Similar findings apply to employment – a recent analysis also cited by NACRO showed that lack of education and employment are more closely linked with recidivism than any other predictive factors. Research into rehab schemes for young offenders suggests that quality of work is important – low paid casual work in the 'secondary' labour market had much less protective effect once ex-offenders reached 18 than better paid more secure work.

Without support, young people with an interrupted or non-existent work record, poor or no educational qualifications and no references will struggle to get into any kind of employment, let alone worthwhile employment, and are more likely than not to re-offend.

CASE STUDY • JOHN

John came to the Foyer in March 1999. He had been referred by the Probation Service as he was living in a bail hostel which they felt was inappropriate and was making him depressed.

John had a short history of petty offences, mainly related to cars. He had, about eighteen months before coming to the Foyer, sustained a serious injury to a hand which required an operation. He had been unable to obtain satisfactory treatment for the injury and had subsequently made a successful claim for disability benefit.

When interviewed for the Foyer, John stated he would like to do training for work but he believed himself to be unemployable, due to his hand injury. He also described himself as "thick".

After John had attend life skills training for some weeks, feedback from staff was that they believed John to be able and bright. He was subsequently tested for dyslexia and the Careers Service did a Morrisby test. These tests showed John was not dyslexic but lacked confidence in his own ability. The Morrisby tests showed him to be bright with a leaning towards engineering.

John subsequently enrolled at East Berkshire College on a Modern Apprenticeship. In conjunction with this, Foyer staff followed up on John's injury with the local hospital, resulting in a successful operation on John's hand.

John left the Foyer in June 2000 as he was allocated a Housing Association flat. This coincided with the completion of his first year at college where he passed all exams. At the annual award ceremony, the Foyer gave John an award for being the resident who had overcome the most hurdles to achieve.

John was lucky that his history of offences meant that the Probation Service were involved. Without their referral to the Foyer, it is likely that he would have continued as an offender.

of the NACRO research quoted above, by ensuring that no offender was homeless on release, would on any calculation more than cover the costs of comprehensive resettlement support.

The Foyer Federation provides matched funding partnership grants, from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, for Foyers working in partnership with criminal justice agencies (YOTs, Probation, Community Safety and Crime and Disorder Partnerships) to provide enhanced one to one support for young offenders who may need more than the 'plain vanilla' Foyer service.

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Homelessness has much wider ramifications than rough sleeping. Young homeless people face a very difficult transition into full adult life, as poverty, low self-esteem, lack of family support and lack of qualifications reinforce each others' effects. As they try to become participants in the labour market they deserve extra help from Government to counter-act these disadvantages. Instead they face barriers not shared by their contemporaries still living at home.

The Government can demonstrate that it is serious about increasing opportunity and combatting exclusion by tackling these issues. If it fails to do so, it will not only condemn many of this generation of homeless young people to poverty and unemployment, but ensure that the effects are felt in the next generation as well.

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9. Costings are taken from *Wasted Lives*, NACRO/Prince's Trust 1997, and refer to young offenders aged 15–17.
10. Quoted in *The Forgotten Majority*, NACRO, 2000.

MAKE OR BREAK: HOW HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

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THE FOYER FEDERATION
opening doors for young people

Foyers provide accommodation with opportunity for homeless young people, in order to enable them to fulfil their potential and play a full role in society including through employment. Over the last eight years Foyers in the UK have helped around 25,000 homeless and disadvantaged young people to make the transition to adult independence.

Foyers have existed for many years in France. The first UK schemes were opened in 1992, and there are now 104 Foyers in operation across the UK, with many more in development. Foyers have pioneered holistic working with a range of local partner organisations, taking responsibility, with the young person, for addressing all the difficulties they may face in straightening out their lives, including health, life and basic skills, substance dependency, relationship problems and access to learning and employment opportunities.

The Foyer Federation is the national umbrella body for the UK Foyer movement. The Foyer Federation provides support and leadership to Foyers through the sharing of experience and good practice, including the Foyer Accreditation System, by promoting Foyers and the Foyer concept to potential supporters of Foyers, and by providing a national voice on issues of concern to Foyers and the young people living in them.

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